

WALL STREET JOURNAL  
20 August 1987

## Senior CIA Aide Denies North's Claims, Saying He Didn't Help Plan Arms Sales

By EDWARD T. POUND

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WASHINGTON—A senior Central Intelligence Agency official disputed written assertions by Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North indicating that the official was involved intimately in planning the Iran arms-sales operation.

At the same time, Duane "Dewey" Clarridge, head of the CIA's counterterrorism section, supported Col. North's testimony before the Iran-Contra congressional committees that Col. North maintained a close relationship with the late William Casey, the former CIA director. Col. North has described Mr. Casey as a driving force behind the secret U.S. Iran-Contra operation.

"I think they were both admirers of each other," Mr. Clarridge, a friend of Col. North's, said of the Casey-North relationship. A declassified transcript of Mr. Clarridge's closed-door testimony before the Senate and House committees on Aug. 5 was released yesterday.

### Testimony of Station Chief

Despite contradictory testimony by other CIA personnel and sharp questioning from lawmakers, Mr. Clarridge continued to insist that he wasn't aware that American-made Hawk surface-to-air missiles were being shipped to Iran in November 1985. As he had testified previously, Mr. Clarridge said he thought this Israeli shipment contained oil-drilling equipment.

According to the committees, the CIA station chief in Lisbon has testified he learned that a November flight from Portugal to Iran would contain Hawk missiles, and that the weapons were being shipped to secure the release of American hostages. The station chief testified that he cabled this information to Mr. Clarridge, who told the panels he never saw the cable.

Portugal refused to grant landing rights to the Israeli plane that was to ship the Hawks, and a CIA-operated company was used to make the delivery.

At the time of the CIA's involvement in the shipment, President Reagan hadn't yet signed a so-called finding authorizing such involvement.

Mr. Clarridge was one of three CIA officials whose private testimony is being released by the panels. Their testimony is important partly because of the information on Mr. Casey's involvement in the Iran-Contra affair and his relationship with Col. North, the central figure in the operation. Mr. Clarridge, along with Col. North, was actively involved in aiding the Nicaraguan rebels when U.S. support for the so-called Contras was legal in 1984.

Mr. Clarridge, a favorite of Mr. Casey's, characterized as untrue or incorrect portions of memos written by Col. North in 1985 and 1986 that indicated Mr. Clarridge played an important role in the Iran arms-for-hostages operation.

Referring to a computer memo that Col. North wrote in December 1985 to his boss, National Security Adviser John Poindexter, Mr. Clarridge said: "It seems to be implying that this whole grand scheme was checked out with me, which was not true."

Separately, records obtained by the committees show that there were discussions within the Reagan administration in 1984 about possible help for the Contras from South Africa. Mr. Casey sent Mr. Clarridge to South Africa in April 1984. However, nothing came of the matter.

### Poor Recollection

Some committee members were disturbed by Mr. Clarridge's poor recollection. Sen. William Cohen (R., Maine) told the CIA official: "On practically every single major event that we have been considering, you have virtually no memory at all, and whenever a question is directed toward you, you indicate, 'Well, it may be, I just can't recall.'"

Sen. Cohen, in questioning Mr. Clarridge, provided some new information about CIA dealings with Albert Hakim, the Iranian-born businessman who managed the secret network of shell companies and offshore bank accounts used in the Iran-Contra operation. Sen. Cohen said Theodore Shackley, a former CIA official and an associate of some participants in the Iran-Contra affair, sought to recruit Mr. Hakim to work for the CIA in 1976, according to a memo written by Mr. Shackley.

Mr. Clarridge, who was sharply questioned by the House committee's deputy counsel, W. Neil Eggleston, speculated that the idea of pursuing a strategic opening to Iran began in the Reagan administration as far back as 1981 or 1982.

2

2.